

Small Groups Curriculum

Week of June 20, 2021

OPENING PRAYER

Shine in our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, the pure light of Your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind that we may comprehend the proclamations of Your Gospels. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments so that, having trampled down all carnal desires, we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the illumination of our souls and bodies, and to You we offer up glory, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Before the Reading of the Gospel
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

For the Sunday of Pentecost

SUNDAY EPISTLE

Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11

SUNDAY GOSPEL

The Gospel According to John 7:37-52; 8:12

All readings are available at goarch.org or the Daily Readings app.

EPISTLE READING

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontos and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

GOSPEL READING

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This is really the prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed."

Nikodemos, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee." Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Discussion

INTRO NOTES

1. Thirsting for Christ

- A. In the Gospel Jesus promises us that, if we thirst, we shall not only receive but become a source of Living Water
 - i. “If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.’”
 - ii. This calls back to the Old Testament, as Israel fled Egypt
 - 1. “Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff; water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their livestock drank” (Numbers 20:11)
 - iii. As Saint John tells us, “now this he said about the Spirit...”
- B. In the Book of Acts, we see the Spirit come on the day of Pentecost
 - i. “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit...”
- C. The dryness we experience in the desert has been quenched by the Lord

2. The Coming of the Holy Spirit

- A. In the Gospel, Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit
 - i. The Spirit had not been experienced for centuries in Israel
 - ii. When Christ promised this, people were shocked
 - 1. “No man ever spoke like this man!”
 - iii. Christ can send the Spirit because it is His Spirit; because He is God
 - 1. “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
- B. In the Book of Acts, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of fire
 - i. “And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them”
 - ii. This is the same Spirit that led Israel out of Egypt, and descended on the Temple when it was consecrated
 - 1. “And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night” (Exodus 13:21)
 - 2. “When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple” (2 Chronicles 7:1)
- C. Yet now, the Spirit of God has been given to us all

Discussion

3. The United and Prophetic Church

- A. In the Gospel, Jesus tells His disciples that they will become a source of Living Water for others
 - i. “Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water”
 - ii. In the Old Testament, only certain prophets received this gift
 - 1. But, in Christ, all can receive this promise
- B. In the Book of Acts, we see the consequences of the Holy Spirit coming to all believers
 - i. “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
 - ii. While people were separated by language after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 10), these divisions have been overcome
- C. We are called to preach the Gospel to all nations

For more on this Sunday’s Scripture readings, watch:
[Live the Word #36 | Where are the Prophets?](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How are you feeling right now?
2. How do you try to satisfy your thirst for God? How deep is this thirst? Do you sometimes seek to satisfy that thirst apart from God?
3. The religious leaders expected the Messiah to be a certain way, and believed Jesus didn’t fit the bill. How might your own expectations of what Christ looks like stand in the way of your actually encountering Him? What would you need to risk, like Nikodemos, in order to draw near to Him as He is?
4. God has given the same Holy Spirit to us that He gave to the Apostles on Pentecost and through which He emboldened their prophetic voice. What is it like to contemplate the reality that you have that same Spirit within you? How can you be a prophetic voice in your school, neighborhood, etc? Who in your life do you think needs to hear the gracious words of Christ from your mouth?

If you don’t get through all the questions, that’s ok!

Discussion

WRAP-UP NOTES

Each Wrap-Up should be personal and based on your time together as a Small Group. These three questions can help you, as a Small Group Leader, wrap up your weekly meeting:

1. What are you grateful to have learned or heard in the conversation?
2. What simple statement or question from the conversation can you share again that would be most helpful to hear again three years from now?
3. If you could share up to twelve words on the topic of “the Spirit” what would you say?

AT THE END OF MEETINGS

We give thanks to You, invisible King, Who by Your boundless power fashioned the universe, and in the multitude of Your mercy brought all things from nothing into being. Look down from heaven, O Master, upon those who have bowed their heads before You; for they have not bowed before flesh and blood, but before You, the awesome God. Therefore, O Master, make smooth and beneficial for us all, whatever lies ahead, according to the need of each: Sail with those who sail; travel with those who travel; heal the sick, Physician of our souls and bodies. Through the grace, compassion, and love for mankind of Your only-begotten Son, with whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Following the Lord’s Prayer
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom